

I claim:

1. A method of generating operative notes by a surgeon after a surgical procedure comprising:

displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be  
5 created;

displaying a procedure performed for one of the patient cases;

displaying a list of sections for an operative note and text that comprises a selected section from of the list of sections of the operative note;

inserting predetermined text into the operative note having indicia  
10 indicating where the surgeon must modify the operative note to include information specific to the patient upon which the surgical procedure has been performed; and

providing means for successively identifying the indicia where text must be inserted into the operative note.

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2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

displaying a list of surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes; and

wherein the step of displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created is performed in response to the selection of a particular  
20 surgeon from the list of surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes

3. The method of claim 1 wherein information comprising the list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created and the procedure

performed for the patient case are obtained from a database created by a separate software package.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the list of patient cases is created by  
5 accessing a database to determine all procedures recently performed and then  
determining whether an operative note has already been completed for that patient  
case.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the predetermined text inserted into the  
10 operative note comprises text unique to the particular surgeon and the procedure  
performed for the patient case.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein only one section selected from the list of  
sections of the operative note is displayed at a time.

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7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of selecting the  
predetermined text to be inserted from a list of different predetermined texts.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of allowing the  
20 surgeon to select and modify the procedure performed in the patient case.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of confirming the  
identity of the surgeon; and

wherein the step of displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created comprises displaying a list of patient cases associated with the surgeon for which operative notes need to be created.

- 5           10. Computer software for entering operative notes by a surgeon after a surgical procedure performing the steps of:
- displaying a list of surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes; and
  - displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created in response to the selection of a particular surgeon from the list of
  - 10 surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes;
  - displaying a procedure performed for the patient case;
  - displaying a list of sections for an operative note and text that comprises a selected section from of the list of sections of the operative note;
  - providing means for the surgeon to select a section of the operative note to
  - 15 view that section of the operative note;
  - inserting predetermined text into the operative note having indicia indicating where text must be inserted into the predetermined text to customize the operative note to the patient upon which the surgical procedure has been performed; and
  - 20 providing means for successively identifying the indicia where text must be inserted into the operative note.

11. The software of claim 10 wherein information comprising the list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created and the procedure performed for the patient case are obtained from a database created by a separate software package.

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12. The software of claim 10 wherein the list of patient cases is created by accessing a database to determine all procedures recently performed and then determining whether an operative note has already been completed for that patient case.

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13. The software of claim 10 wherein the predetermined text inserted into the operative note comprises text unique to the particular surgeon and the procedure performed.

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14. The software of claim 10 wherein only one section selected from the list of sections of the operative note is displayed at a time.

15. The software of claim 10 further comprising the step of selecting the predetermined text to be inserted from a list of different predetermined texts.

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16. The software of claim 10 further comprising the step of confirming the identity of the surgeon; and

wherein the step of displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created comprises displaying a list of patient cases associated with the surgeon for which operative notes need to be created.

5           17. A system for creating operative notes by surgeons after performing a medical procedure comprising:

          a database of predetermined text containing operative notes for a plurality of surgeons and a plurality of procedures, the database comprising a plurality of records, each record comprising a separate operative note for a particular  
10    procedure and having at least one surgeon associated with each operative note, and wherein each operative note comprises indicia for indicating where the operative note must be modified to customize the operative note to a particular patient upon which the procedure was performed;

          means for displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need  
15    to be created;

          means for selecting a patient case from the list of patient cases;

          means for selecting a particular operative note from the database of operative notes;

          means for successively directing the surgeon to the indicia of the operative  
20    note indicating where the operative note must be modified;

          means for editing the selected operative note to insert text into the predetermined text to customize the operative note to the patient upon which the procedure was performed.

18. The computer software of claim 17 wherein the means for selecting a particular operative note from the database of operative notes is performed automatically based upon the surgeon performing the procedure and the procedure  
5 performed.

19. The computer software of claim 18 comprising:  
means for displaying a list of sections for an operative note; and  
wherein the means for editing the selected operative note to insert text into  
10 the predetermined text to customize the operative note to the patient upon which  
the procedure was performed displays allows editing of only a section from the list  
of sections that has been selected from the list.

20. The computer software of claim 19 further comprising:  
15 means displaying a list of surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes;  
and

wherein the means for displaying a list of patient cases for which operative  
notes need to be created operates in response to the selection of a particular  
surgeon from the list of surgeons authorized to prepare operative notes  
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21. The computer software of claim 20 wherein information comprising  
the list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created and the

procedure performed for the patient case are obtained from a database created by a separate software package.

22. The computer software of claim 17 wherein the means for selecting a particular operative note from the database of operative notes is performed manually by the surgeon by selecting an operative note from a list of operative notes.

23. The computer software of claim 17 further comprising the step of confirming the identity of the surgeon; and

wherein the step of displaying a list of patient cases for which operative notes need to be created comprises displaying a list of patient cases associated with the surgeon for which operative notes need to be created.